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THE SITUATION IN THE
OCCUPIED TERRITORIES
OF CROATIA

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 14 February 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement issued on 4 February 1997 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on Eastern Slavonia, Croatia.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under the item entitled "The situation in the occupied territories of Croatia", and of the Security Council.

(Signed) N. H. BIEGMAN
Permanent Representative of the
Netherlands to the United Nations

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ANNEX

[Original: English and French]

Statement issued on 11 February 1997 by the Presidency of the European Union concerning Eastern Slavonia (Croatia)

The European Union has noted with satisfaction the statement of 31 January 1997 by the President of the United Nations Security Council welcoming the Croatian Government's letter of intent on achievement of the peaceful reintegration of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium into Croatia and emphasizing the importance of the holding of the elections to be organized by the Transitional Administration. Completion of the peaceful reintegration of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium and restoration of their multi-ethnic character is an important part of international efforts to maintain peace and stability in the former Yugoslavia.

The European Union endorses the view taken by the Security Council and the Transitional Administrator that the rights and guarantees listed in the Croatian Government's letter, if implemented in their entirety, represent a solid basis for holding elections at the same time as those in the rest of Croatia and allow substantial progress to be made towards achieving peaceful reintegration of the region. The European Union, like the Security Council, would emphasize that the holding and certification of elections, according to a decision by the Transitional Administration, within the envisaged timescale, will be possible only if the Croatian authorities respect their obligations. The European Union therefore calls upon the parties to cooperate fully in this process of peaceful reintegration.

In this context, the European Union also reaffirms the right of Serbian refugees from Croatia at present living in neighbouring countries to obtain citizenship, return safely and participate in future elections. Implementation of the commitments given by the Croatian Government during and after the mandate of the UNTAES is an essential factor for the future development of relations between the Republic of Croatia and the European Union.